

**Chief of Naval Operations
Adm. Jonathan Greenert
Delivers remarks at the Naval War College Graduation
June 15, 2012**

Admiral Greenert: You know it's always difficult coming after Christianson and speaking in command and you name it. He's a good officer and exactly why we put him up here.

I have to take care of a little bit of admin before I provide my prepared remarks.

First, I apologize, I have a little bit of laryngitis so hey, that's a good thing. It's going to be a little bit shorter than it would otherwise be.

But we should give a hand to the band.

And if the individual who sang the National Anthem is still with us, please identify yourself. We really want to give you a hand.

Thank you all, thank you very much.

And I give you all big kudos for singing the National Anthem. I've spent a lot of time overseas throughout my career, and most countries that I have attended events, they sing their National Anthem. So all the [inaudible] down here where I work in Washington, they just kind of stare out there and think about how important they are and don't sing the National Anthem. So, my hat is off to you. So I think that's our future. Nicely done.

You know, this is a great country. The United States of America. In joining the Navy you get second choices, and if you don't believe me, any time you see James D. Kelley, Dean after it, or Jonathan W. Greenert, Chief of Naval Operations, and those of you that know us know this country gives you second choices and this Navy is a forgiving Navy. There are a lot of leaders out there that we owe quite a bit to. And we will not run for office without checking with several people for you.

John Christianson, you owe me a round, by the way. I got 18 guns so we can go to the club afterwards -- [Laughter].

And the last piece of admin. Actually, I do have a few remarks here. There's an individual here that I've had the honor of knowing he and his spouse for a number of years who serves now at the college. We are so honored to have him here. This is a couple who gave so much to their Navy and to their country. They're one of the bravest couples and he is among the bravest individuals I have ever served with internationally in the Navy. I'm talking about Admiral Guillermo Barrera and his wife Anna Maria. Would you please stand and allow us to give you --

The Colombian Navy is a superb navy and would not be so without the work of this couple.

So Mr. President, thank you for the introduction. I appreciate it. Thank you for taking care of educating the next generation of leaders. I couldn't agree with you more in how you describe how this college, how this course, how this institution is viewed jointly and internationally. I hear about it all the time.

So folks, I'd like to talk to you, the graduates today, a little bit about three things. Why I think this course that you just took, and I talk about all of them, is important for you and how it's going to help you deal with our choices, our issues here in the future. And a little bit about rebalancing to the Asia Pacific and where we're going in our Navy and in our Department of Defense.

It's a good course you took. It's great. It provides you the opportunity to assess yourself, your situation, your service, your Navy and your country and where it is going. I'm hopeful that you are recharged intellectually and that maybe you see things more clearly. And as you look to see things more clearly you may say hey, things aren't nearly as clear as I thought they were. That's okay, because that's the way it is. That's the world we live in today and that's probably, when you look in the history, the world those who went before you lived in when they were out there, you can talk about Midway, Coral Sea, the War of 1812, and things aren't always as they appear in the little brochure until you read into the history and see what kind of challenges were these people facing?

They were just like you and me. They were JOs at one time and they had some hard things to do. The world's not black and white. You need some context and you need some perspective. This course should have given you some opportunity to get a sense for that.

It is going to take patience, understanding, and looking at other perspectives to move ahead in the job we've got to do out there. You look at information dominance and the cyber aspect, you look at anti-access, area denial and the need to get into places around this world, you look at piracy, maritime intercept operations in the maritime arena, you look at humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. It's all over the place. That's your future. That's our future. That's what we've got to deal with. So we can't really look and loiter on the past and what it was and what we want it to be. It's going to take innovation, flexibility, and above all resolve.

Look, we're entering a different fiscal reality. If you've been in your service in the last 11 years, most of you have, I don't know what you did before that. Life's been pretty good fiscally. But the 20 years before that, the time that I was in, it wasn't like that and it's not going to be like that. We're going back to a more difficult time. It's going to take all that stuff I just talked about before to do this right. But it's been done before. We can do this. It's not that people haven't faced up to that challenge.

We're entering an era of increased maritime demand. It's a fact of life. They say hey, why does America need a Navy? Well, America needs a Navy. The good news is your government, your national authority, if you wear the white out there or something blue that has maritime, they're going to be asking for you. There ain't going to be a whole hell of a lot more of you to do it so you're going to have to figure this out. We'll be figuring this out.

History will be helpful to you but it's not going to be your answer. You're in a unique era. Everybody was that dealt with the kind of challenge you're going to deal with. It's not the same as the pre-war of the last century. It's like it, but it's not exactly the same.

So dealing with the choices and the challenges. Look, we're at an inflection point. We needed a new strategy. We have a new strategy. We needed it for a host of reasons. I'll give you three easy ones.

Number one, the Budget Control Act. That will give you one right off the bat. And the deficit that this country is in, that the world is in, dictates that we have to get our fiscal house in order or it's going to affect things and things won't be the same, the stuff we buy will change.

Number two, we're ending an era of operations in the Middle East. You know that. Iraqi Freedom done. New Dawn, we'd like to say done. We're still working it. And you know the story of Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. But there's a new emerging MidEast of problems out there in the Asia Pacific and the concerns. The Department of Defense has developed a strategy to deal with it. I think it's effective. We had an open, transparent process for the whole strategy. The President was involved personally in this, your President. And we're revising our maritime strategy. This institution has had a part in that. Some think we'll be done in a matter of months. Trust me, folks, this will take longer. We'll probably be done with it next spring because we've got to do it right, not do it quickly.

Meanwhile, we kind of have to get ready for heavy weather. What do you do when you get ready for heavy weather? First of all you've got to make sure your people are taken care of. They've got to put the slickers on, they've got to batten down the hatches, you've got to make sure they're safe out there on the deck. We've got to find the right course to steer and you've got to stay with it and bear through it.

In my view, I gave you six words if you read my Sailing Directions to get ready for this, to get us through this period of time and move on ahead. I picked them almost a year ago. To me they're still effective. I still see it almost exactly the same way.

That is number one, warfighting has to be first. That is how we will be evaluated, and I'll tell you it's in all your uniforms out there and it's probably, those of you who are international, that's how you're going to be viewed. Your country calls on you, you've got to go out and get it done. You've got to bring relevant capability today, and you've got to build tomorrow's capabilities not just in platforms. It doesn't matter how many Joint Strike Fighters and P-8s and the right ship I get out there. If they aren't whole, they can't do the job, it won't matter.

We've got to operate forward in this Navy. That is where we are most effective. That is where we have always been most effective. Today we have 100 ships on deployment of the 285 in our Navy. Fifty of them are in the Asia Pacific; 30 of them are in the Arabian Gulf. You get the percentages pretty easy, huh? That's the way it will be in the future relative ratio as we work forward and we'll need innovative ways to increase that presence tomorrow, and we'll do that.

Third, we've got to be ready. We need confident and proficient crews to get the job done. That's where you come in. You have to make sure that your people are confident that they can go out and get the job done. That's what be ready means to me.

Look, these tenets apply in my boardroom, in the halls of the Pentagon, and I'll tell you many service chiefs, my fellow service chiefs, they should apply in your ward room and your ready room out there. I expect you to apply these tenets and view your decisions through this lens as you go out to get the job done.

For those of you who are joint and are international partners, I'm committing to you we'll adapt what we're out there to do to resonate with what you need and with what we've got to do together. Our major focus will be in that way. The heads of Navy that I talk to at this very campus and the International Sea Power Symposium see things the very same way.

In the future, you've heard the President, you've heard our Secretary of Defense, the Asia Pacific is going to be our number one focus for our strategic guidance. And it is. It's in our strategic guidance. We are balancing toward that direction. You just saw, or I just mentioned 50 out of 100 ships that we have out there are in the Asia Pacific. So we're pretty much set in that direction. We will innovate to improve our presence in the Arabian Gulf, looking at Bahrain. We will innovate in Europe as we bring four destroyers to homeport in Rota. And we'll innovate in the Southern Command as well. Our presence will alter some because we'll have alternative ships. Our presence will be there. We will increase allied cooperation and our effectiveness, and we're working that hard today.

In the Middle East it is an increasingly maritime theater. It's just heading that direction. General Mattis is very clear when he talks about it. And frankly, the MidEast is our near term concern. We have a very high level of rotational deployment there today. We have two carrier strike groups. We've had two carrier strike groups there in the Arabian Gulf for over two years and we're looking to see what that necessity may be in the future. We will bring more partners and allies into building partnership capacity in that theater.

In Europe we'll continue to support our allies, and the key as I mentioned before will be bringing those four destroyers to Rota. It will serve our ballistic missile defense mission in Europe as we work with our partners, but it will also free up destroyers to move into other theaters as well.

In the Southern Command, in the African Command, we'll have new platforms, different platforms, to resonate and replace traditional presence, which was effectively the ships we had today or the ships we had to send over because that's what we had today. Joint high speed vessels, littoral combat ships, and afloat forward staging base, a new concept, these are things that we will see come into being in the future and they will resonate with the requirements that we have in the future.

Again, Asia Pacific will be our long term focus. That's where five of our seven defense treaties are. It's where 6 of the 20, the G20 economies are, where the largest armies in the world are. Half of our deployed fleet is there, as I mentioned. Half of that deployed fleet, about 25 ships, are permanently homeported in Asia Pacific.

Our balance is going to occur in four ways. Number one, it's ships, and I just mentioned that.

Number two, it will be capability. Our capabilities as they move to the Asia Pacific will be guided by the AirSea Battle concept. That is the lens, that's the way we'll move our capabilities and the capabilities that we'll choose.

We will intellectually balance to the Asia Pacific, focusing our attention on the security challenges that exist out there but also our warfighting skill sets will resonate with those that we need in the Asia Pacific.

Lastly, basing. We have about 55 percent, if you will, of our ships in the Pacific or on the West Coast, and that will shift to 60 percent of our ships in the West Coast or homeported in the Western Pacific.

So what do I need from you? Look, I showed you examples of the hard choices and where we've got to go in the future. We're going to have to address the near and the far term concerns, there's no doubt about it. And they'll be slightly different the way we address them. So I need you, the leadership, who are now intellectually recharged, hopefully you've had the time to assess where you stand, you see the world isn't exactly like you may have seen it before even if you had your O5 command. You should see things somewhat differently.

Admiral Christianson mentioned it. I need you to be bold. You don't have a lot of time. You may think you do, but you don't have a lot of time in your career. It's limited and it goes by pretty fast. I need bold leaders.

I need confident leaders. You should be confident. This institution's a great institution. You're ready to go.

And I need you to be willing to be accountable. Accountable to your country, accountable to your bosses, accountable to the sailors, the soldiers, the airmen, and the coast guardsmen that you're going to lead, and the marines that you will lead out there.

The 200th Anniversary of the War of 1812, we've talked about it this year. We've talked about Coral Sea, 70th Anniversary. Talked about Midway, 70th Anniversary. We were successful there because we had bold and accountable leaders who saw an opportunity and they took it and they took risks, calculated risks. Not foolish risks, but calculated risks.

For you allied and joint partners, you are a source of ideas for us in the Navy and you have shared concerns and shared ideas. We can't do it right in this world without you.

So hopefully one of the things you definitely took away from here was how to nurture a relationship, how to build trust and confidence, because you're going to have to leverage the trust and confidence and the network that you get today through your international and your joint partners. It happened in our success in natural disasters in Haiti, in Chile, and in Japan in the last

two years alone. It's the friendships that you gain here that will endure for many years, for probably the lifetime of your career.

You've got to learn to trust, and if you learn to trust somebody then you learn how to accept what they tell you, and then you're going to learn how to do calculated risk and your risk will be successful.

Let me close with this. Enjoy your accomplishment, but get ready. We've got work to do out there. It's here. It's out there waiting for you today. I hope you're ready for it because it's ready for you. You have the experience and you now have the intellectual capacity and I need you to go out there and I need you to demonstrate it.

There are a lot of families and friends here today. My message to you today is thank you very much. Thank you for being the wind under the wings of these graduates here today that have chosen to serve, and thank you for imbuing in them the values and the virtues that they need to carry out their mission including integrity and trust and confidence and all the other ideals that we know are accorded.

Congratulations graduates. Thank you for serving so far, and thank you for continuing to serve. God bless you all. God bless the United States of America.

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